

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE

Development Assessment Systems & Approvals

SUBJECT: CAPITAL SOLAR FARM – MODIFICATION 1

PURPOSE

To determine a modification request for the Capital Solar Farm.

BACKGROUND

The Capital Solar Farm was approved by the Minister for Planning on 21 December 2010. Figure 1 (Tag B) shows the location of the project and is reproduced from the Proponent's Capital Solar Farm EA. The approved project, a 50 megawatt capacity solar farm, includes:

- 32 photovoltaic array blocks incorporating rows of panels mounted on a fixed steel frame and a series of 64 central inverters and 32 kiosk transformers;
- Cabling between the PV array and central inverters (underground or frame-secured);
- Approximately 1.8 kilometres of transmission line connecting to the existing 330kilovolt Capital Wind Farm substation (overhead or underground) including any augmentation or switchyard;
- Internal access tracks, upgrades to existing roads, fencing and landscaping;
- Site office, operations and maintenance and research office buildings;
- Temporary construction facilities such as a site compound and equipment laydown area.

PROPOSED MODIFICATION

Approval is sought for modification to the approval (MP10_0121) such that conditions F2 and F3, regarding the provision of an Operational Noise Report are deleted.

CONSULTATION

In accordance with section 75X of the EP&A Act and clause 8G of the EP&A Regulation, the modification request was made available on the Department's website. Due to the minor nature of the proposed modification, the modification request was not exhibited, however comment was sought from the local Council who raised no issues in its response (08/08/13). The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) was not consulted as solar farms do not require an Environment Protection Licence (EPL) under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* (POEO Act) and therefore Council is the Appropriate Regulatory Authority (ARA). No public submissions were received on the modification request.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

On 1 October 2011, the Minister delegated his powers and functions under section 75W of the EP&A Act to Directors in the Major Projects Assessment Division in cases where:

- the relevant local council has not made an objection;
- a political disclosure statement has not been made; and
- there are less than 10 public submissions in the nature of objections.

As the local council has not made an objection, no political donations have been made in the last two years, and no public submissions were received, the Director may determine the modification request under delegated authority.

KEY ISSUES

Operational Noise

The Proponent has provided information indicating that there is no noise emitted from the solar farm apart from minimal light vehicle movement (up to 10 car trips daily) and contends that the preparation of an Operational Noise Report, required by approval conditions F2 and F3, is superfluous.

The Department, in its Director-General's Report for the Capital Solar Farm, concluded that the operation of the proposed solar farm was highly unlikely to significantly impact upon the noise amenity of non-associated receivers.

The Department concurs with the additional information provided by the Proponent, and is satisfied that no detriment will be caused to the community by the removal of these conditions.

It should be noted that condition C5, which requires the submission of an operational noise verification report for the Director-General's approval and condition F1, which requires the Proponent to implement reasonable measures to comply with relevant noise criteria including the NSW Industrial Noise Policy (Department of Environment and Climate Change, 2000) will be retained. In addition, condition E2 requires the implementation of an Operational Environmental Management Plan for the project. Collectively, these conditions will ensure any residual potential for noise impact will be controlled.

RECOMMENDATION

It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Director approve the modification request and sign the attached modifying instrument (Tag A).

Prepared by:



Tracy Bellamy
Planning Officer, Energy

Approved by:



Karen Jones 27/8/13
A/Director, Infrastructure Projects

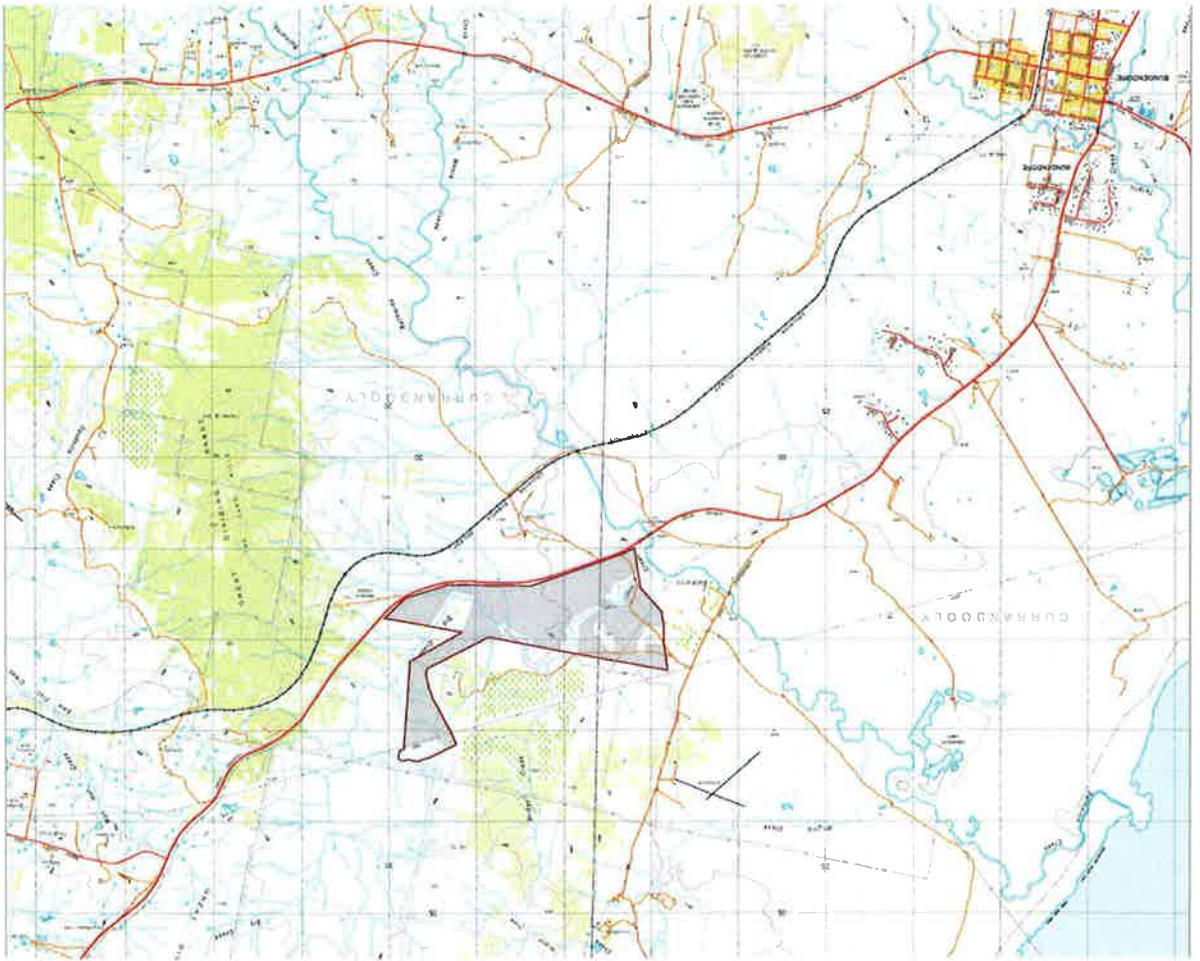


Figure 1 – Project location

